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December 1979

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Soldiers train to become chemical experts

page 12

Your generation sometimes has been referred to as the "Me Generation" — interested only in personal pleasures and self-gratification — a selfish group of individuals who are concerned only about immediate rewards, a group who could care less about the welfare of communities in which they live. I don't believe this is true. You are not much different from past generations in terms of your concern for doing right by yourselves, your neighbors, and your country. As you grow and mature, you will assume greater responsibility and will become leaders in your communities and in society at large.

One of the most difficult decisions facing you is to decide what you want to do with your lives. Those of you who want to become involved and work for the common good have numerous opportunities and choices. I believe one of the most rewarding ways is to serve your country in some capacity. The Marine Corps provides you with an opportunity to serve your country as a member of a dedicated, cohesive team. Your reward will be in knowing that what you are doing is vital to the security of our country.

Another feature of Marine Corps life, and the other services as well, is the opportunity to broaden your experiences, enabling you to make an intelligent career choice later on. It has several attractive features, particularly for those of you who are not interested in going to college immediately after high school. For example, you can delay the college decision and explore a variety of potential career fields of personal interest, while accumulating educational benefits for later use. If you choose to go to college, you may find the financial aid provided by one of the service academies, ROTC programs, or summer training programs for officer candidates to be of great interest.

Whatever you decide, remember this — you may find your experiences in military service so interesting that you decide to make a career of service to your country. If the thought of military service as a career has never crossed your mine, I would encourage you to consider it. I believe you would find it as challenging, stimulating, and enjoyable as I have over the past 37 years.

R. H. BARROW
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Profile

D1.41:23/3

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Editors' note:

On page 20, October Basic Facts, under educational programs, the Servicemen's Opportunity College Associate Degree Program is a Department of Defense program, not just Army. For further information, contact education center/office/facility at any military installation.

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Front and back cover photos by Herb Thweatt

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I send greetings to those of you who are completing your secondary education. You are congratulated for sticking to the task and preparing yourselves for the future.

Many of you have dreams of being lawyers or secretaries, doctors or nurses, engineers or draftsmen, veterinarians or farmers. Others of you may be undecided about what to do with your lives and may be considering college or any of a variety of training programs. For you, the undecided, I propose a challenging alternative — an alternative of service to your country.

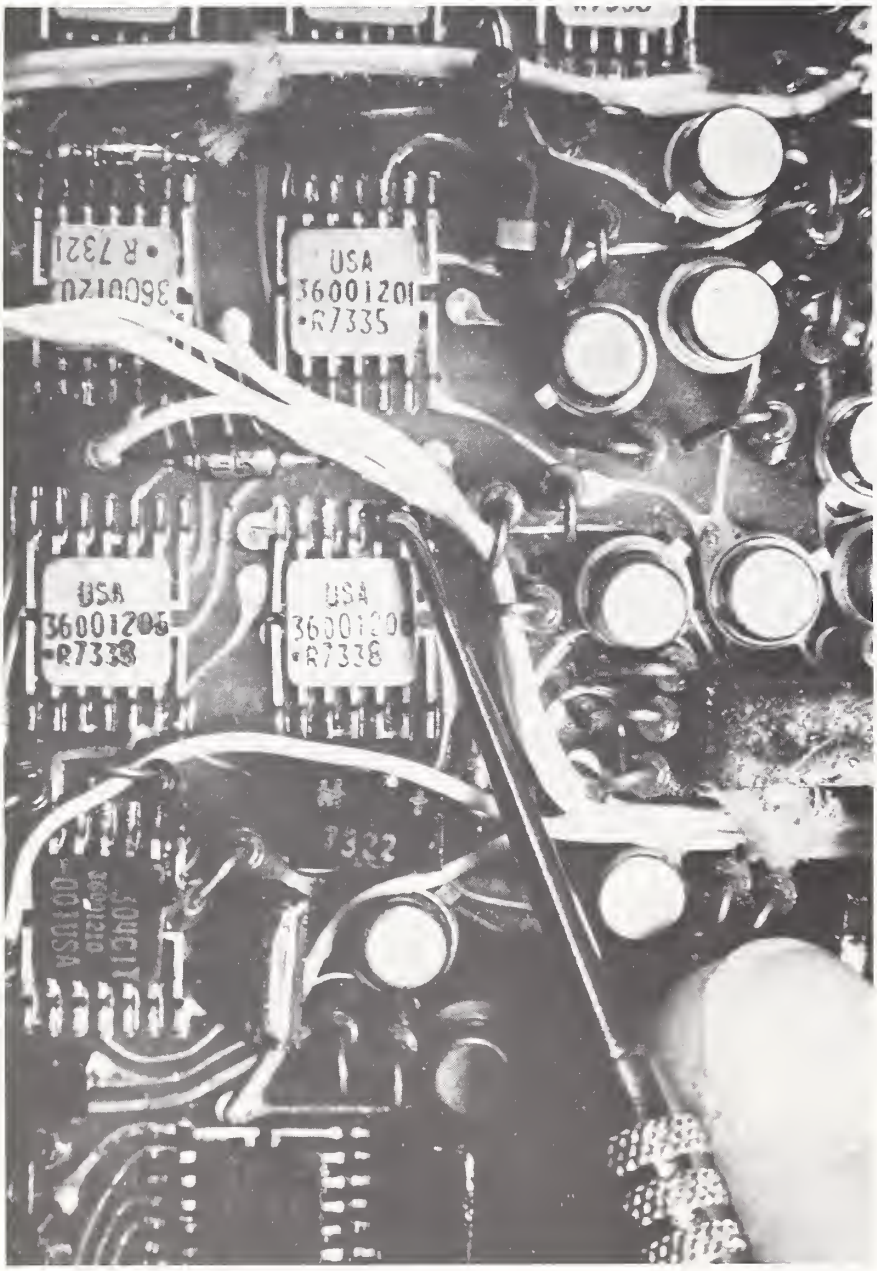
I would like you to think about military service. The emphasis is on **service.** You will be serving your country, manning the ships, and filling the ranks of our armed forces. You will be guarding your country and the free peoples of the world.

What is in it for you? Almost everything you want. You will be training for the future, traveling to foreign countries, and having greater responsibility than you ever thought possible.

Above all, military service builds self-confidence and self-discipline. Ask your friends who have been in the service. I'm sure that they will agree that now they have more confidence in their abilities and more discipline to work for their goals than they ever imagined. You get a chance to grow as a person, to tackle difficult tasks, and to meet the challenge of leadership.

If you choose to go to college, by all means do so. But if you are undecided, think about our "band of brothers." You will enjoy serving with us and we will be glad to have you in our ranks.

Leland D. Crawford
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps



A dental discoid/cleoid craver comes in handy when the electronics "doctor" needs to get right into tight spaces.

The li

Story and Photos by Hugh Hawthorne

Piped-in melodies soften the mood of the cramped but efficient work center, relieving a bit of the strain upon those who work within the immaculate enclosure. Keith Elder, a 19-year-old "surgeon" from Madison Heights, Va., examines his next patient, referred to him for surgery by the diagnosticians in the office down the hall.

Surveying the neat array of instruments at his disposal, including dental explorers, carvers, scalpels, bone files and hemostats, Keith selects a metal brush and alcohol to clean the damaged area before doing anything else.

Mindful of the unwavering dictum of his trade, Keith cleans the area thoroughly, even though there is no danger of infection. He and the six other "doctors" in his office are in no danger of a malpractice suit either, although much depends on their successful operations. Their "patients" are miniature and micro-miniature electric component parts. The doctors' office is Work Center 690 in Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-

ttle things count

26's Avionics Building at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. The seven Marines who work there know it as the "mini-comp" repair shop.

The surgery the "doctors" perform involves repairing and/or replacing tiny parts like resistors, transistors and potentiometers, and rebuilding runs (the "wires" on a printed circuit board), or even the printed circuit boards themselves.

The underlying skill allowing Keith, a brown-haired, lanky lance corporal, and his associates to ply their craft is the ability to deftly manipulate the surgical stitching of electronics — electrical solder.

"Practically anyone who's ever worked with a soldering tool might think there's no trick to soldering a few wires together, but the question is — will the job be reliable?" mini-comp chief, Mike "Rip" Van Riper proclaims.

Reliability, a byword in Rip's business, means peace of mind to pilot and crew, who stake their lives on the reliability of vital aircraft systems. "A shoddy job, using poor soldering techniques, may perform its function for a time," the amiable staff sergeant and Mansfield, Ohio native continues, "but chances are, the component will fail and require more time and effort to correct than it would take to do it right the first time."

Doing it right the first time begins, just as Keith began his operation, with a clean work area, clean tools and a clean "patient." "Any dirt or impurities in the area will inhibit good solder connections and promote quicker corrosion," Keith's co-surgeon, Brian "Parkay" Butters, explains.

"The alcohol scrubbing also removes the conformal coating, a protective, anti-corrosion lacquer on most components," Keith adds. "Often, a hard, thick epoxy resin also has to be etched away, and that

Cpl. Bill Douglas vacuums away an old solder connection with a 1000 degree fareinheit extractor and suction hose.

Lance Cpl. Brian Butters shapes the leads for hook terminals on a relay with a pair of duck-bill pliers.

is where many of our dental tools come into play.''

Like a doctor, carefully analyzing his x-rays and charts before making a decision, Keith too must make a few careful choices. ''Picking the right tool for the job is very important,'' Keith says, rejecting one soldering tip in favor of another, slightly smaller. ''By using the wrong tools, you can cause more damage to the work than you will repair.''

Archie Sprinkle, a 22-year-old corporal relates an obstacle with which all prospective ''surgeons'' must come to terms-manual dexterity.

''We have to be able to work with our hands,'' Archie, a classical violinist, explains. ''This is close work. These circuit boards pack a lot of components into a small space. Some of our tools are very sharp and some are very hot. Without a sure touch you can cut or burn something very easily,'' the Red Oak, Okla. native concludes.

Two of Archie's fellow surgeons share his musical bent and one, Mike Kashkin, found his Salina, Kan., Drum and Bugle Corps experience a definite boon to his job satisfaction. ''I try to set up a rhythm in my work, being a drummer,'' Kashkin confides. ''It makes the time go by faster and helps to relieve the eyestrain, one of the hazards of the job.''

Mini-comp's other musician, Bill Douglas of Kansas City, Mo., moonlights as ''Screaming Willie,'' the lead singer and bass guitarist for the Whitewater rock band which is currently ''hot stuff'' on the local club circuit.

Morale is high among these doctors of electronic components, to the ultimate benefit of their patients. This may be due to the fact that all are working within their field of interest. Sprinkle and Kashkin are

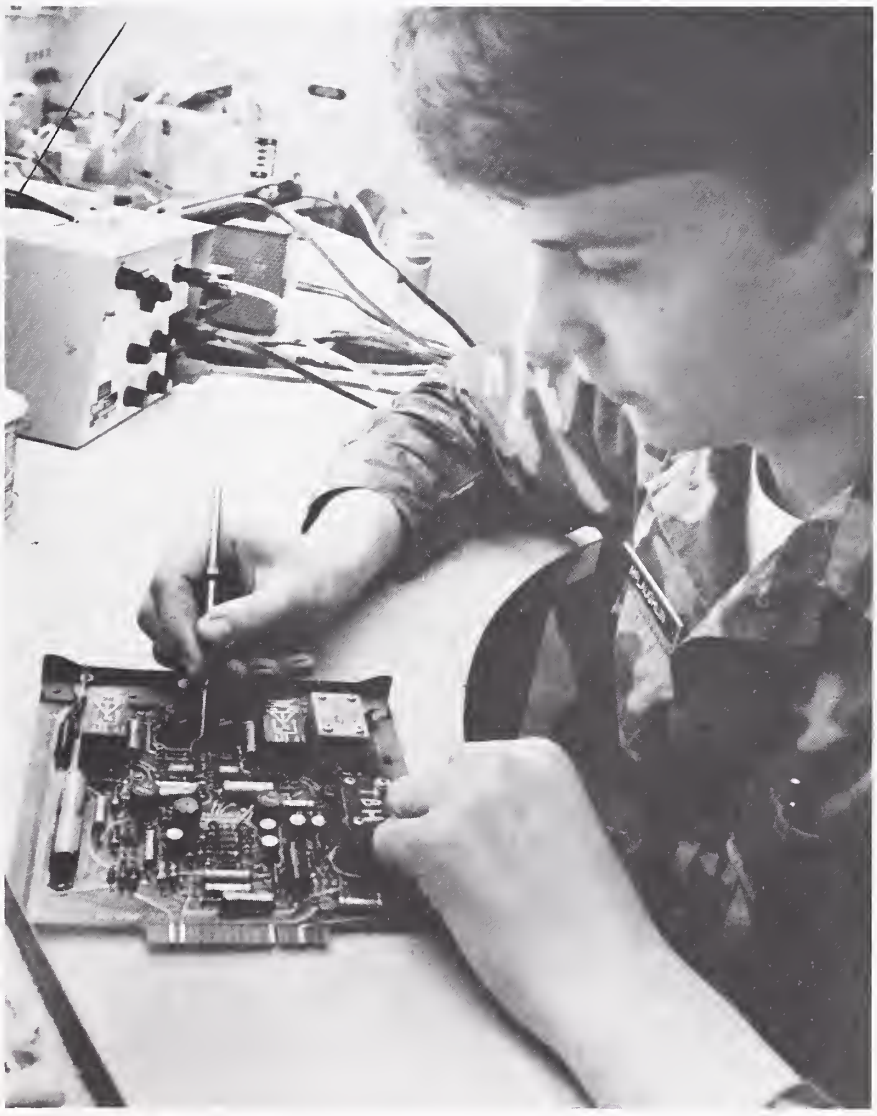
both taking a correspondence course in home radio and TV repair and Sprinkle purports to "one day open my own shop," while Kashkin, who owns his own mini-computer, dreams of a personal, computer-run house.

Brian, a Palmyra, New Yorker, will be able to build, repair and program mini-computers of the type Kashkin owns, thanks to his correspondence course in mini-computer technology.

For most Marine avionics technicians training begins at the basic electronics schools at Memphis, Tenn. and Twenty-nine Palms, Calif. For the electronics surgeons, it culminates at the micro-miniature components repair school, a 5-week course at Beaufort, S.C.

Keith Elder, applying his "Hippocratic Oath" of reliability, sworn to at Beaufort, to the treatment of his patient, must have but one answer to his boss's question, as he closes up the job. Will it be reliable? His answer must be simply, "Yes."

Ed. note: Our thanks to Sgt. Hugh Hawthorne, public affairs office, Marine Corps Air Station (H), New River, Jacksonville, N.C., for providing the research, photos and articles from which this story was compiled.



Sgt. Gary McLaughlin removes old flux from a bad solder connection with a dental explorer.

Keeping the force in the air

Status boards in the Job Control Center, nerve center of the maintenance complex, are kept up to date by controllers who man the facility 24 hours a day. Duties include monitoring and directing maintenance on aircraft as well as providing a central contact point for transient aircraft. (USAF photo by Amn. Don Lee, Langley AFB, Va.)

Whenever someone hears the words "Air Force," the immediate reaction is aircraft and flying. Pilots comprise a very small percentage of the total membership of the Air Force, so without these others, there would be no aircraft. There would be no flying.

Some of the prime movers behind the Air Force being able to fly and fulfill its mission are men and women assigned to aircraft maintenance units throughout the world.

A new concept in aircraft maintenance was unveiled in 1977 by the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Tactical Air Command (TAC), Langley AFB, Va. It's called POMO (Production Oriented Maintenance Organization). It came about because "it fits our needs," putting maintenance people on the flightline.

These are the words of Lt. Colonel Ted Cates of TAC Headquarters, also at Langley.

Under the previous maintenance system, the regulation was written for both large and small maintenance units. "It was all right for the Strategic Air Command bombers," Cates says. "They take off from home station and don't have to worry about self-sufficient deployments. When they deploy, the maintenance people go along."

Tactical forces differ, because they deploy as a smaller unit. Under the old concept, many key specialists not already part of the squadron maintenance team had to be integrated into the team. Under POMO, they are now on the team.

Although the 1st TFW was the first combat unit to adapt POMO, the system had been tested earlier at Luke (Ariz.) and MacDill (Fla.) Air Force Bases. All TAC units completed conversion to the new concept last year.

POMO contains the best features of previous systems combined with lessons learned from the Israelis during the Middle East War of 1973.

We studied their capability and found a great amount of cross-utilization of specialists," says Cates. Electricians, for example, performed tasks outside their specialty in order to get airplanes back into the air. And that, adds Cates, is the key to POMO. The system puts more aircraft maintenance people on the flightline where they are needed.

Another important feature of POMO is that decisions are made at lower levels, just as they would be during a war. "We are training a new generation of maintenance supervisors," Cates states. "They are middle managers

who don't have to wait for a staff decision. They make such decisions themselves and tailor the decisions to their needs just as they would in combat.''

Cates adds that the future promises standardization, particularly in organizational structure. Aircraft maintenance units, attached with each flying squadron, account for the majority of flightline maintenance personnel.

''POMO is designed for the Air Force of tomorrow,'' he adds, ''for the Air Force of integrated avionics and advanced technology. We have a diamond here and the rough edges are being polished.''

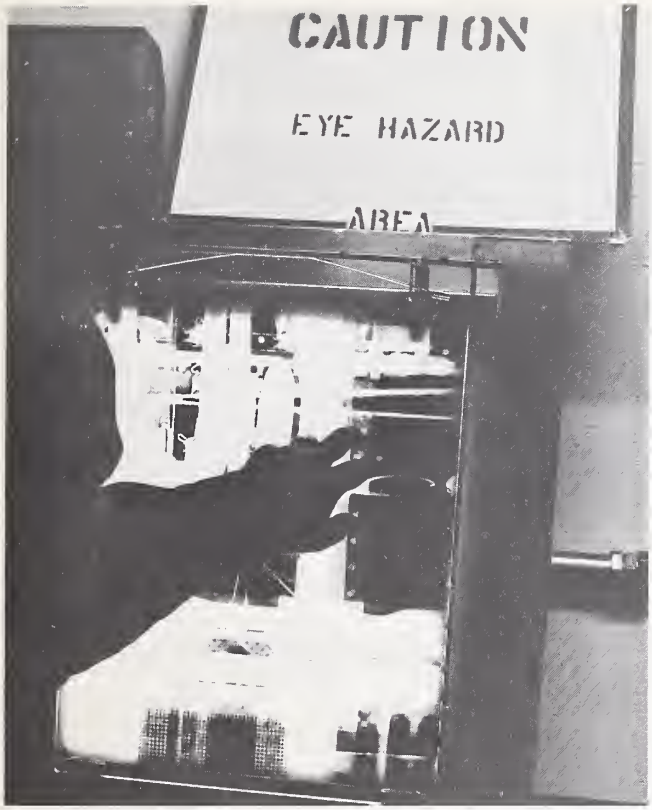
As one pilots says about the F-15 Eagle of the 1st TFW, ''When I first started flying the F-15, I opened the panels and looked it over closely. I was astounded by the engineering feat it took to build the plane; let alone keeping it running. With this in mind, I think the maintenance people at Langley do an excellent job.''

Testimony to that statement is that the 1st TFW flies about 70 daily missions in the F-15. Other aircraft at Langley include the EC-135 (airborne command post), T-39 (trainer) and UH-1 (helicopter) and they all fly daily. Langley crews also support joint exercises from Korea to Holland, pull air defense alert, train maintenance and air crews from other F-15 bases and still fly an annual authorization of 17,881 hours.

It takes a lot of hard and dedicated work by many people to keep the Air Force flying and this is what more than 2,000 men and women at Langley are doing. So the next time you hear ''Air Force'', remember for each pilot in the air, there are hundreds of people on the ground who put the ''force'' into the ''air.''

Maintenance people have no time for claustrophobia as their jobs may call for getting into small places such as inside the engine intake of an F-15. (USAF photo by Staff Sgt. Roger Toler, Langley AFB, Va.)

Material for this article was furnished by the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Public Affairs Office. Quotes taken from an article written by Maj. Robert W. Nicholson.



FOD (foreign object damage) causes as much, if not more, damage to aircraft than any other source. X-ray machines such as this one at Langley are capable of penetrating the outer portion of an aircraft enabling technicians to spot damage. (USAF photo by Staff Sgt. Roger Toler, Langley AFB, Va.)

No fighter pilot willingly leaves a "perfectly" good aircraft in flight, but should the need arise, he wants to get out as fast as possible. Modern fighters are equipped with ejection seats that must be inspected, installed and, if needed, repaired. (USAF photo by Staff Sgt. Roger Toler, Langley AFB, Va.)

Another maintenance mission completed, a Langley-based F-15 is given the go-ahead for take-off. (USAF photo by Staff Sgt. Roger Toler, Langley AFB, Va.)

Privates Tony Solomon and Doris Knight listen and add their own tactics as a senior instructor draws a diagram of defense on the ground.

Realistic training increases NBC

Story and photos by Herb Thweatt

Crawling through the tall marsh grasses of beautiful Edgewood Md., a squad of young would-be Chemical Staff Specialist get first hand experience with realistic combat situations and new knowledge they will carry for the rest of their lives.

The place is Aberdeen Proving Ground, the township is Edgewood, and the young men and women of H Company are in the thick of simulated attack.

''You'll probably get probed during the day. If you get probed, the only thing they're looking for is to see what your strength is,'' said one of the field instructors. ''So if your whole line opens fire on one man right here on the front, they're going to know where the perimeter is...and if they try to ambush us at night they will know exactly what they're looking for and exactly where our positions are. You don't want your people to fire any automatic weapons if you can help it. Have them keep all the weapons on slmi-automatic...you don't want to let them know what kind of fire power we have unless we have to. Any questions? Okay! get up there and get your people in position.''

You cover the rear and I'll take care of everything else. Two chemical specialist hold their ground.

Squad Leaders Tony Solmon, of Anderson Ind., and Doris Knight, of Moscow Ark., listened patiently to the instructor and moved quickly to prompt their soldiers into position. The privates stationed the chemical specialist team at points they had been using for the past 24 hours and they waited patiently for certain attack.

''I had chemistry in high school and when I enlisted I thought this job would be more chemical work like in the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 92D, but it isn't,'' said Patrick McCue, of Victoria Tex.

''All of us here have the MOS 54E, that's Chemical Staff Specialist. The job may not be what I had in mind when I signed up, it's much more and I really like it.''

The chemical specialist start as operations assistants. They perform the jobs of preparing liquid and dry decontaminants, operating pumps, servicing smoke-throwers, water heaters, and related chemical machinery. The work and the

What's the password? Six soldiers from H Company make travel very tough for a possible spy.

survival

training is very hard and demanding.

Private Diane Harr, of Owasso Mich., had different ideas about her new Army profession, but the differences didn't stop her from giving her 100 percent.

"One of the instructors bet me a dinner and a six pack that I couldn't max our on-hands station to station exam, and I did." The 18 year-old was excited about her acheivement, "I got 100 points out of a possible 100 and I was the only person in the company to do so. The skill course consisted of weapons and tank identification, call for fire, spot reports, nuclear biological and chemical (NBC) full reports, prisoner of war situations, chemical identification, and search and identifying land mines."

"What I am doing isn't anything like or close to the chemistry class in high school, the work is much more exciting," said Harr.

The training of H Company is a small but important function of the U.S. Army Ordnance and Chemical Center and School. For the time being the school is located at

Teresa Kendrick is calling for fire support. The task is part of an overall test that prepares chemical specialist for actual duty.

Finding and identifying land mines requires steady hands and nerves.

Soldiers help each other during decontamination drills. The soldier standing is helpin

Aberdeen Proving Ground. Plans are to move the center and school to Fort McClellan Ala., at the end of 1979.

Actual ordnance and chemical training takes place on two separate posts located about 14 miles apart. One post is in Aberdeen and the other in Edgewood. The two combined facilities make up the proving ground.

On the perimeter of H Company's Personnel Decontamination Station the enemy prepares for a surprise rear attack, make-believe bombs are thrown and the patented chemical cry is echoed — GAS!

Behind every bush, in every available hiding place the soldiers dawn their protective mask and move to re-enforce their positions.

"Things were never like this back home in West Virginia," said Teresa Kendrick. She had just simulated spotting the enemy and calling for fire (extra support from the air).

"My husband and I are here taking the same course. His name is Nathan and we're both happy because we've managed to be together all the way through our military experience."

The sounds of bombs bursting and automatic weapons firing break the natural sounds of nature, the battle is in full swing.

The instructors move about the scene shouting to soldiers who haven't done their jobs and to those who were just too slow to mask, "you're dead!"

As suddenly as the battle started the mission is over. The inexperienced young troopers have learned life-saving skills and they move on to the final phase of their job.

Soldiers contaminated during the fight move through the decontamination station and are slowly processed. The station consists of the following steps and at each step there is a soldier with a special duty.

First the contaminated soldier moves to the entrance and into the area for personal equipment. The next series of stops are to decontaminate boots, protective mask and hoods, and then the boots, outergarments, shirts, trousers, gloves, socks, underwear and lastly the hood and protective mask are removed.

The soldier then showers and moves to the medical aid tent and to clothing exchange. This exercise was simulated and cutoff fatigues were worn as undergarments, so no one was ever nude. In actual combat situations all clothing would have been removed.

The boots, mask and hoods are decontaminated by using soapy water and a brush, and all items that can't

seated soldier remove contaminated boots.

be cleaned and re-issued are destroyed.

The instructors watch each step very closely and they make sure that all soldiers know the proper way to accomplish their mission, and that is to help the ground soldier survive nuclear, biological or chemical attack.

The contaminated outer jacket must be removed quickly and in a special manner. The instructor makes sure every safety precaution is taken.

Getting oiled on South Padre Island

Story by Paul Short
Photos by PAC Dale Puckett
unless otherwise credited

Coast Guardsmen and Coast Guard Reservists joined forces with other government agencies and civilian contractors this past summer to fight what is being called the ''World's Largest Oil Spill''.

The massive battle to protect the environment was fought on the beaches of South Texas. The oil spill wasn't really a spill by popular definition, but was the result of a gusher from an exploratory well in Mexico's Bay of Campeche. The well blew out in early June and 20,000 barrels of oil spewed from it every day until mid October, when the greatest minds in the industry finally figured out a plan to cap the runaway well.

Meanwhile, winds and tides have pushed much of the oil up on resort beaches in Mexico and on Texas' South Padre Island. Much more oil has either sank in the Gulf of Mexico or continues to drift, its ultimate destination to be decided by the currents.

The organization that is tasked with fighting the pollution is called the National Response Team. It is made up of a Coast Guard captain and his staff based in Corpus Christi. Scores of Federal and state officials are involved, but the ''man on the beach'' (or woman) in blue coveralls is most likely a Coast Guard enlisted person.

These Coast Guardsmen may be highly trained members of the Coast Guard's National Strike Force, volunteers from reserve units, or members of local Coast Guard commands.

Three mobile sub-command posts were established along the Texas coast at Port Isabel, Port O'Conner, and Port Aransas. Their primary objective was to boom (close) off sensitive bays and lagoons, such as Laguna Madre near Port Isabel, to prevent oil from fouling fish and wildlife breeding areas. This has been accomplished by deploying skimmer boats and floating barriers at cuts and inlets along the island.

The secondary push has been to clean the beaches of South Padre Island. This is being done with rakes and shovels wielded by crews of local workers supervised by Coast Guard personnel.

Beach cleaning is slow because the

Master Chief Petty Officer Bob Brown holds up some of the gooey tar that washed up on the beaches of South Padre Island.

dirty work must be accomplished under the blazing South Texas sun. Dollar-sized oil globs and a thick, chocolatey-like oil and water mixture called mousse are raked into windrows like so much hay, and then loaded into trucks. Coast Guardsmen monitor the operation and keep track of man-hours and the amount of sludge removed. The estimated daily cost is about $75,000.

Boatswain's Mate Third Class Mike Richard of Lafayette, La., volunteered for the cleanup duty. Normally stationed in New Orleans, Richard said he asked for the duty mainly because of his concern for the environmental protection.

Another beach patrolman, Boatswain's Mate Second Class Jon Peltier of Longview, Texas, is a reservist. In civilian life Peltier manages a mobile home park. He volunteered for oil pollution duty because he missed the days when he was on active duty helping clean up beaches, Peltier headed for the recruiting office in Shreveport, La., to apply for active duty, this time as a career regular Coast Guardsman.

One unusual aspect of Peltier's stint on South Padre Island was his clean up crew. He claims he doesn't know how it happened but his entire crew was female, college-age and bikini clad.

"I'll pit my crew against any of the others out there on the beach," Peltier said. "They work hard and deserve all the credit they can get." Indeed the clean up efforts with rake, shovel and absorbent material has removed much of the oil from the sand. Although the methods may seem primitive, there is a reason for using hand tools.

"We can scoop some of the oily sand up with front end loaders or bull dozers but it is not environmentally wise to keep that up for long," explained Lieutenant Harry Vaughn, on-scene leader at Port Isabel. The scraper blades can tear at least one-sixteenth of an inch of sand from the beach with every swipe. Although the Padre Island beaches are considered dense, continued use of this heavy equipment could damage the shore. So the blister-producing shoveling remains the lesser of two evils.

In addition to the booming efforts and the beach cleanup, several Coast Guard cutters have become involved in the oil spill. The Corpus Christi-based tender Anvil and Port Aransas based patrol boat Point Baker helped take oil samples in the Gulf. They also towed skimmers, booms and other pollution fighting equipment into position.

Daily overflights of the area to the Mexican well site are flown by Coast Guard and Navy patrol aircraft to help chart the oil sheens. One frequent crewmember on the overflights was Marine Science Technician Second Class Dennis Sisk, who was on temporary duty from the Coast Guard's Oceanographic Unit in Washington, D.C. Sisk's observations and projections on oil slicks and currents are relayed to federal and state officials, and other interested observers at nightly briefings.

As of this writing, the fight to

Coast Guard diver Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Al Harker prepares to enter the water to check on floating booms deployed to keep oil from the lagoon near Port Isabel, Tex.

protect the environment along the Gulf coast was continuing. Although it will take scientists years to know for sure, on-scene observers are optimistic that this largest oil pollution case in history will have a minimal effect on the area's ecosystem. The cost has been staggering, probably in the millions, with thousands of Coast Guard and other government personnel becoming involved. Local residents, too, have pitched in because they know their future livelihood is at stake.

For the Coast Guardsmen such as Jon Peltier, Dennis Sisk, Mike Richard and others, the job will continue, even after the Mexican oil well is capped. Just how long, is anyone's guess. Perhaps throughout the winter, or maybe longer. But one thing is certain — the Coast Guard's pollution fighters will remain on the South Texas coast, living out of suitcases and seabags in otherwise nearly deserted motels until the "World's Largest Oil Spill" is history.

Crew of college girls gets instructions from Coast Guardsman Mike Richard during the clean up of South Padre Island. From 80 to 100 workers have been manning rakes and shovels to clean the beaches since June.

A Navy civilian engineer and a Coast Guard diver prepare to check floating booms in their rubber raft. A spirit of cooperation between the various Federal and state government agencies prevails throughout the cleanup.

Lt. Jake O'Neal (left) briefs a liaison officer from the Mexican Navy on observations made by Coast Guard overflight of the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo by Paul Short)

Cleanup crew in action under the blazing South Texas sun. (Photo by Paul Short)

Planes can't fly without it

Keeping those wings and flaps smooth are important to the overall operation of any aircraft. Most of the photography was shot at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va. (Photo by Herb Thweatt)

Story by JO2 Caleb P. Maher
Navy Public Affairs Center
Norfolk

Jim Richards of St. Albans, Vt., talks like a man who is thoroughly enjoying his work as an aviation structural mechanic with the U.S. Navy.

Richards, a 1972 graduate of Bellows Free Academy in St. Albans, is a petty officer third class assigned to the U.S. Naval Station at Rota, Spain.

As an aviation structural mechanic, Richards' specialty is hydraulics. Besides maintaining and repairing "utility systems" such as air conditioning, heating, pressurization and oxygen systems, Richards is responsible for maintaining the landing gear, fire detection and extinguishing systems, and safety belts and harnesses on expensive aircraft based at his duty station.

"My job is important because I maintain and repair hydraulic parts on multi-million dollar aircraft," said the former star athlete. While in high school, Richards earned letters in baseball, basketball and soccer. He was named Best Athlete during his senior year and was an all-state baseball pitcher as well as shortstop.

"When I fix a part, I have to make sure it's working correctly," Richards said. "I have to do it right the first time because people's lives depend on my work.

"Coming to Rota has been advantageous for me because it has given me a better outlook on life," recalled the 24-year-old Vermonter. "To be able to see how other people live in the world has been an eye-opening experience."

. The naval station is located in the province of Cadiz at the southernmost tip of Spain. Residents of the Rota Naval Station enjoy a generally mild climate. Stock horses are raised and grapes are grown in the countryside surrounding the naval station, and the manufacture of wine

Navyman Jim Richards performs a pressure check on a hydraulic connection in the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) at the Naval Station, Rota, Spain. (Photo by Bill Pointer)

and leather handicrafts are major industries in the province.

"The people here in Spain live differently than back home in Vermont," he said with a smile, "When an American comes to a place like this, he finds he has to slow down the pace a bit.

"One of the best things about being here at Rota is the chance one has to see the rest of Europe," said the 5-foot-7 Navyman. "In fact, it also gave me the opportunity to travel to England to marry my wife, Sue, at her home in London."

The primary mission of the Rota Naval Station and its tenant commands is to support the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet, which operates in the Mediterranean area. As an aviation structural mechanic at the Rota Naval Station, Richards is performing a vital service to the aircraft used in supporting the fleet.

"I enjoy working in the air frames division because there is a sense of camaraderie here," Richards said. "The command and the people in it help one another, and that's important when you're far from home."

The 6th Fleet that depends in part on the services performed by Richards' command averages about 35 ships, 200 aircraft and more than 25,000 sailors and Marines. It can apply naval power where, when and if needed across the 2,320-mile long Mediterranean Sea and its adjacent areas.

The military and civilian personnel and their dependents at Rota are served by a retail store, a commissary (supermarket), hospital and recreational facilities such as a bowling alley, swimming pools and a gymnasium.

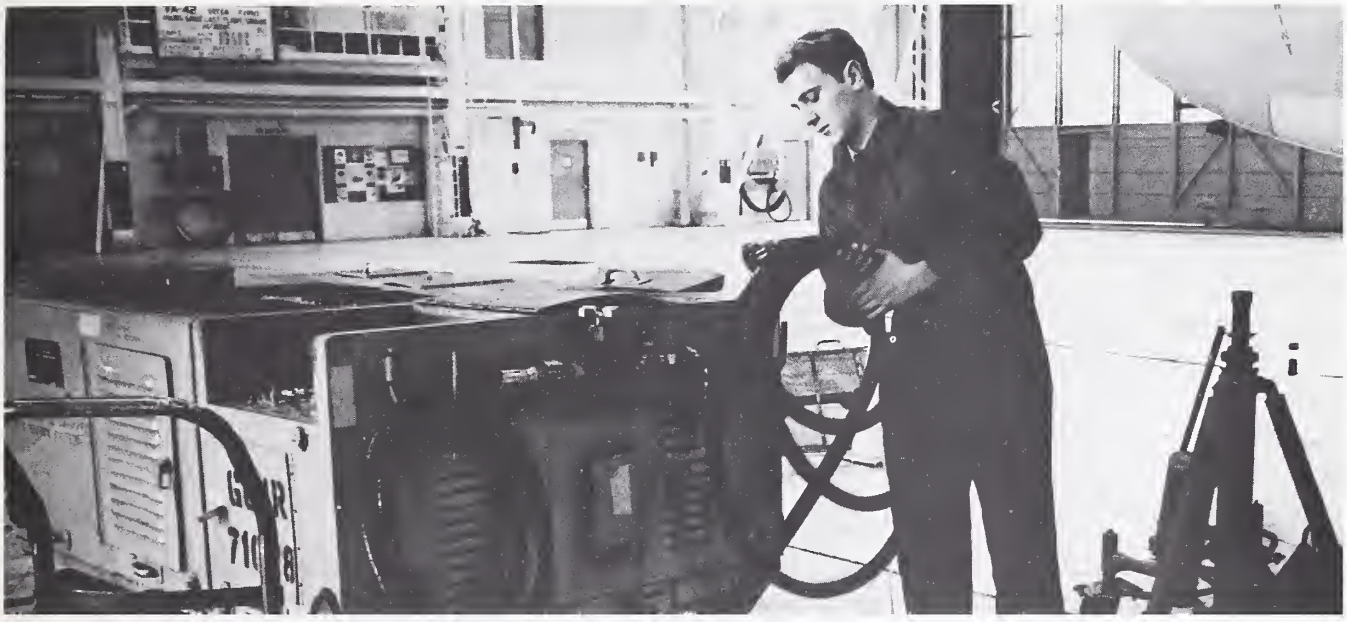
"My wife and I are enjoying our tour in Spain and I am enjoying my work at the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD)," Richards declared. "I get to play on the department's softball team and my wife and I try to keep as socially active as possible here."

When Richards joined the Navy back in early 1977, he was looking for a skill and a trade. Now he says he has achieved that goal.

"I like my work; it's as simple as that."

Checking the landing gear is part of Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenneth Collis' job. He is a structural mechanic with a speciality in hydraulics. (Photo by Herb Thweatt)

Navy Airman Richard Ziewick takes a hos



Keeping bolts flush with the skin of the aircraft takes a steady hand and good old know how. (Photo by Herb Thweatt)

from the hydraulic compression dolly for test. (Photo by Herb Thweatt)

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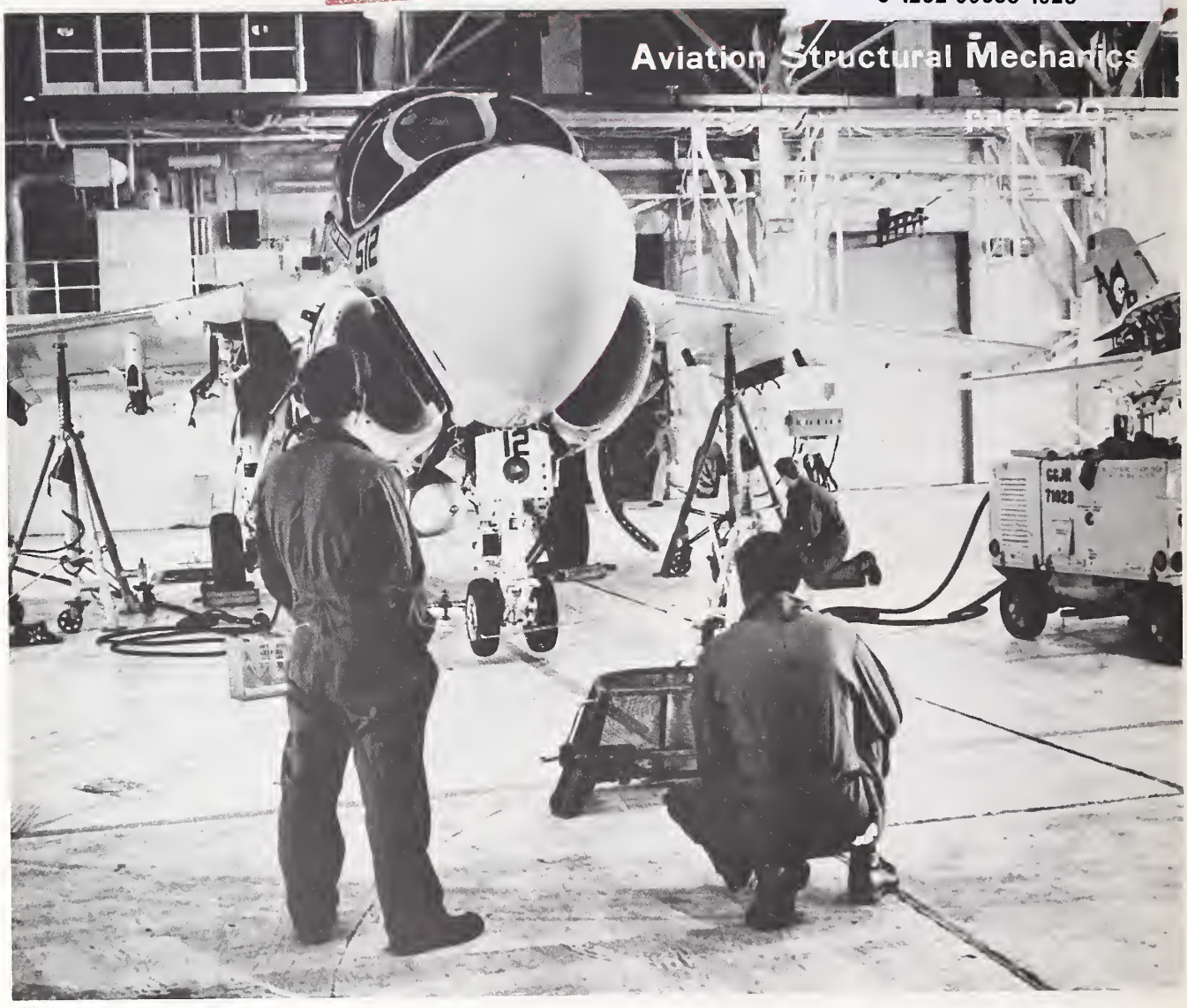

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